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LOS ANGELES

IN THE BEGINNING

IN THE BEGINNING
by Bernice Bronson

with the members of the Looking Glass Theatre
Providence, R.I.

An Audience Participation Play
Kindergarten through 3rd Grade

CAST:
(YELLOW
(SUN

(ORANGE
(BULL
(CREATOR
(BOY FISHING

(RED
(MOON
(ROOSTER

(BLUE
(SKY WOMAN

(GREEN
(CUCKABURRA BIRD
(BEAUTIFUL GIRL

(PURPLE
(TIGER CAT
(MOTHER OF GIRL

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NEW PLAYS FOR CHILDREN
Box 2181 Grand Central Sta.
New York, N.Y. 10017

We developed this production at a time when we had absolutely no funds at all, and morale was at a low ebb. The show was to tour, but there would be no monies for a truck, a stage manager, stage hands, a lighting technician, nor, for that matter, any equipment for them to do anything with.

We had only ourselves, six actors, to create the mood, excitement, clarity and focus that set, costumes, and lights might have given us at another time.

So our costumes and properties were homemade, out of donated materials, and we borrowed a ladder to give us a level change. And out of this we found some kind of new birth--a new way of working and touring--as unencumbered as possible. We felt as if it had set us free.

Since this play came into being through group improvisation, for the entire first season of touring there was never a written script. We preferred this arrangement because it allowed for the most spontaneous interaction between the actors and vastly different audiences with active roles in the production.

Therefore, in solidifying the play into a printed form, we purposely avoided setting every word of dialogue. Instead, in certain sections where the actors must work things out directly with the audience, there is simply a description of the action.

The performance area is a room large enough to accomodate about 200 children sitting in a circle on the floor. A "territory" for each of six groups is indicated by a vividly colored ground cloth: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue Purple. There is a ladder at either end of the room.

Each actor is the leader of his own tribe, and wears a costume matching one of the ground cloths. Before the play begins, the six actors go to six classrooms to call for the children and orient them to what is about to happen. This preparation has turned out to be marvelously effective. It builds a very close relationship between the children and their actor, heightening the children's participation in the performance and providing a natural way to indicate when the participation should start and stop. It also personalizes the entire experience.

If you are not performing at a school, you can easily have the ushers take the children to different areas as they come in, and have the actors meet them there, rather than in the classrooms.

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Each actor will have his own way of talking with the children. The following is only a hypothetical sample:

ORANGE

Hello. What color am I dressed in?

(THE CHILDREN WILL TELL HIM)

That means that we're all in the orange tribe, and I'm the leader of the orange tribe. And this morning we're going to a celebration of all the tribes on their tribal grounds. When we get there, we're going to sit on our tribal territory. And guess what color that will be.

(THEY TELL HIM ORANGE)

You guessed right. Orange. The celebration is going to be really exciting. People will dance...and tell stories--myths. Does anybody know what a myth is?

(CHANCES ARE THEY WILL NOT. IF THEY DO, TAKE IT FROM THERE.
IF NOT--)

Myths are stories about how things in the world started, or where they came from. Like when you were really little, where did you think the sun came from...or what did you think the moon was made out of...or why did you think we had rain?

(IF THEY HAVE NOT HAD ANY IDEAS YET, ASK A FEW MORE QUESTIONS.
IF THEY HAVE IDEAS, LISTEN TO THEM)

You know, at the very beginning of the world, people didn't know where anything came from, and so they just made up stories. Who can make up a story about thunder and lightning?...or about where animals came from....or about why birds fly?

(LISTEN TO THE STORIES)

In the celebration today, we're going to have stories made up by the Indians who lived right here. Have you heard of Indians?

(LISTEN TO THE ANSWERS)

And one of the stories will be from a faraway place called Kenya in Africa. Have you heard of that place?

(LISTEN TO THE ANSWERS. DISCUSS A LITTLE)

And some from China.

(SAME PROCESS)

We're going to need your help in putting on the stories. For instance, in one part of the play, everyone in the orange tribe is going to have to be the wind blowing. How would we do that?

(TRY OUT A FEW SUGGESTIONS)

The orange tribe is going to be really great. And the tribe leaders are going to need your help when they dance. They are going to need you to clap the rhythm, like this:

(TRY SOME CLAPPING)

And another thing they need you to know is a special sign, this:

(SIGN FOR "STOP")

Can you guess what that means? Right! It means stop. And whenever we see that sign, we have to stop whatever we are doing. If we are moving around, we have to stand absolutely still. And if we are talking, or making another noise, we have to stop...still. Let's try that. Talk!

(WHEN THEY HAVE STARTED, GIVE THE STOP SIGNAL)

That was very good. We could try out a few more things now, but I think it's time to get going to the celebration. So everybody get up and come with me.

(ACTOR LEADS THEM TO CELEBRATION ROOM AND THEIR GROUND CLOTH)

ORANGE (CONT.)

This is our orange tribe territory. Everyone get on it and sit down. Now I have an important secret to tell you. We have to stay right here on our territory most of the time. If we go too far away from it, we might lose it forever. And we wouldn't want that to happen, would we?

(CONVERSATION CAN CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE TRIBES ARE SEATED. THE ACTOR MIGHT TALK ABOUT WHAT ROLE HE WILL PLAY, AND ASK THE CHILDREN IF THEY CAN GUESS WHO MIGHT PLAY SOME OTHER ROLES. THE ACTOR MIGHT DISCUSS WHAT ANIMAL THE CHILDREN WOULD LIKE TO BECOME IN THE PART OF THE PLAY WHEN THEY GET TO BE ANIMALS. HOWEVER, WHEN ALL THE TRIBES ARE SEATED, AND SOME SIGNAL IS GIVEN, THE CLAPPING STARTS)

Oh, that sounds like the signal for us to begin clapping.

(EVERYONE IN THE ROOM CLAPS A STEADY BEAT. THE ACTORS RISE AND GO TOWARDS THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. AS THE CHILDREN CONTINUE THE CLAPPING, THE ACTORS BREAK INTO AN EXUBERANT CIRCULAR DANCE, HOOTING, CALLING, CRYING, SIGHING THEIR OWN ACCOMPANIMENT. THEY END CLOSE TOGETHER, FACING EACH OTHER.)

UNISON

In the beginning
Creator made the sun
 the moon
 and the stars

ORANGE TRIBE LEADER

(HAS AN IMPORTANT VOICE)

And then he made the earth
and everything upon the earth.

PURPLE TRIBE LEADER

(THE YOUNGEST ONE)

And then he made man, who wondered about all these things.
(ORANGE LEADER AND GREEN LEADER SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM GROUP AND BEGIN A PANTOMIME)

GREEN

I think the sun and the moon used to walk together
(GREEN AND ORANGE ARE WALKING AROUND THE GROUP, "SINGING" THEIR OWN ACCOMPANIMENT. THEY CONTINUE TO MIME THE STORY)
until one day they crossed a log over some mud
and the moon fell off.

Her face was covered with mud.

The sun wouldn't wait. He went on ahead.

The moon is still hoping to catch up with him. And she still has a dirty face.

(THE TRIBE LEADERS TAKE ONE LAST LOOK AT THE DIRTY FACE, AND THEN GO TO SIT WITH THEIR TRIBES. IT IS HELPFUL FOR THEM TO BE THERE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. PURPLE, HOWEVER, REMAINS IN THE CENTER.)

PURPLE

(BEGINS HER PANTOMIME)

I think that the moon is a big white cat.
And she's chasing the little mice of the night.

(CONCLUDES MIME)

BLUE

Some people say this about the sun:

(A CIRCLE IS MADE, WITH SHIMMERING HANDS)

They say the sun is like a golden earring, worn by a beautiful girl.
(PURPLE BECOMES THE EARRING)

A great bird saw it one day, and stole it.
(YELLOW BECOMES THE WHITE BIRD)

But it caught on a cobweb
that stretches between the homes of men and homes of the gods.
(ALL OTHER AVAILABLE ACTORS FORM THE COBWEB)

ORANGE

Thunder!

(ALL THE LEADERS ARE BLASTED BACK TO THEIR TRIBES)

When the gods are angry

They take a stone and roll it across the floors of the heavens.
(TRIBE LEADERS AND TRIBES BEAT THE FLOOR WITH THEIR HANDS.
THEN SIGNAL TO STOP)

They roll the stone across the floors that go from north to south
across the skies. Boom!

(MORE FLOOR BEATS. STOP)

They roll the stone across the floors that go from east to west
across the skies. Boom!

(MORE FLOOR BEATS. STOP)

And we say it's thunder.

(ALL: BOOM. AND MORE BEATS. STOP)

RED

Winds!

High in the air

Winds are made by the eagles

Flapping their wings.

(YELLOW, ORANGE, BLUE, GREEN HAVE BECOME THE BIRD FORMATION,
BEATING WINGS THAT BLOW RED AND PURPLE)

YELLOW

Thunder is a great dragon

(YELLOW BECOMES THE DRAGON)

who swims through the water

(TRIBES AND LEADERS MAKE BUBBLE SOUNDS)

and flies through the air

(ALL MAKE AIR SOUNDS)

The dragon holds two huge stones. And when he strikes them together,
the lightning flashes.

(ALL MAKE FLASH SOUNDS)

and the thunder roars!

(ALL ROAR AND BEAT THE FLOOR)

The dragon chases the spirits of evil,

(HE MAKES VOCAL SOUNDS IN PURSUIT. RED BECOMES THE SPIRIT OF EVIL)

And he slays them wherever he finds them.

The spirits of evil hide in the trees.

(PURPLE, ORANGE, BLUE AND GREEN BECOME THE TREES)

But the dragon slays them.

(VOCAL PUNCTUATION FROM DRAGON AND EVIL ACCOMPANIES THE
DESTRUCTION. DRAGON ASSUMES A TRIUMPHANT POSE AND THE "TREES"
APPLAUD. THE APPLAUSE BECOMES THE ORIGINAL BEAT, AND THE
LEADERS SIGNAL THEIR TRIBES TO START CLAPPING AGAIN. WHEN THE
CLAPPING HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THE ACTORS DO A DANCE OF TRIUMPH,

A VARIATION OF THEIR FIRST DANCE--LANDING AGAIN IN A CIRCLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, FACING THE TRIBES.)

UNISON

And Creator made animals and men.

(ORANGE SEPARATES HIMSELF FROM THE OTHER ACTORS, WHO FORM A "MOUND OF EARTH.")

ORANGE, NOW CREATOR

Silence...Darkness...In the beginning there was nothing. Nothing but a mound of earth.

(EARTH STARTS TO HUM)

And Creator walked up to the mound of earth and began to mold it.

(GRADUALLY HE MOLDS EVERYONE INTO ABSTRACT SHAPES. THE EARTH IS STILL HUMMING)

And Creator began to shape animals and men from the clay.

(HE DOES, EARTH STILL HUMMING)

All four winds of the earth, I need your help. Help me bring my creatures to life. Four big breaths will blow them to life. Blow!

(ALL THE CHILDREN BLOW)

Two! Three! Four!

(THE HUMMING STOPS. THE CREATURES OPEN THEIR EYES AND SLOWLY BEGIN TO MOVE BY THEMSELVES. GRADUALLY THEY DISCOVER THEIR OWN BODIES. THEN THEY SEE OTHER PEOPLE, AND BEGIN TO MOVE TOWARDS THEM, OCCASIONALLY MAKING SOME SOUND.)

Men! Stand tall! And sing!

(THE CREATURES MAKE VOCAL SOUNDS, WHICH FINALLY BECOME SINGING)

And build your homes!

(THE SINGING BECOMES CONSONANT, AND THEY MAKE A "PEOPLE HOUSE," A CIRCLE, WITH ARMS RAISED, AND FINGERS TOUCHING IN THE MIDDLE, FORMING A ROOF.)

Go out over all the world, and find more earth and clay, and shape it into animals and men.

(THE ACTORS GO TO THEIR OWN TRIBES, AND SAY SOMETHING TO THIS EFFECT:)

TRIBE LEADERS

Plump down right where you are into a little ball of earth. I'm going to mold you.

(THE CHILDREN DO THIS EASILY. THE LEADER GOES TO EACH CHILD AND SHAPES HIM. IF THE ACTORS AND CHILDREN HAVE DISCUSSED THIS IN ADVANCE, THE CHILDREN MAY REMIND THE ACTOR OF WHAT CREATURES THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE. IF NOT, AND THE GROUP IS SMALL AND THERE IS PLENTY OF TIME, THE ACTOR CAN ASK THE CHILD WHEN HE GETS TO HIM. IN OTHER CASES, THE ACTOR MIGHT SAY "TALL" OR "FLAT" AND LET THE CHILDREN DRAW THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS, OR HE MIGHT SPELL IT OUT MORE, "BEAR" OR "BIRD", ETC.)

ORANGE

Tribe leaders over all the earth, when you have finished molding all your creatures, blow the breath of life into them.

(THEY DO. WHEN THE CREATURES COME ALIVE, THE LEADER HELPS THEM BEGIN TO FEEL AND MOVE. FOR INSTANCE:)

TRIBE LEADERS

Yellow creatures, come alive. Open your eyes...
 breathe...breathe...breathe...
 Begin to move your back and head...
 Can you feel your spine?...
 Move your head from side to side...
 And up and down...
 Try out your smile muscles...Smile! Unsmile...Smile...
 Unsmile...

Look at the end of your arms: hands and fingers...
 Open them and close them.

What's that at the bottom of your legs? Feet. Pick them
 up in the air. Shake them...wiggle them...

(THIS EXPLORATION CAN GO ON AS LONG AS NECESSARY. IT IS
 IMPORTANT, THOUGH, NOT TO ALLOW THE CHILDREN TO STAND UP
 BEFORE CREATOR IS READY FOR THEM BECAUSE, ONCE ON THEIR
 FEET, THEY WILL TEND TO BECOME TOO MOBILE.)

CREATOR

Creatures all over the earth, stand tall, and walk around your
 territory.

(EACH CREATURE, ACCORDING TO HIS CHOSEN SPECIES, STANDS AND
 WALKS AROUND THE GROUND CLOTH. SNAKES HAVE TROUBLE WITH THIS,
 ALSO FISH. TELL THEM TO WALK ON THEIR TAILS)

Now you will need homes. Build your houses.

(TRIBE LEADERS TELL THEIR TRIBES TO FACE IN TOWARD THEIR
 TERRITORY, AND RAISE THEIR ARMS, STRAIGHT, UNTIL THEIR
 FINGERS TOUCH SOMEONE ELSE'S FINGERS. CREATOR NOW GETS UP
 ON ONE OF THE LADDERS)

All of my creatures upon the earth, I have gifts for you: I have
 the Sun! And the moon! to travel across the skies and light
 your way.

(HE PRODUCES THE GIFTS)

GREEN

But Creator, the Sun and the Moon are too far away.

CREATOR

Then I must bring them nearer, somehow. I know what we must do:
 Tribe leaders, each one of you go to your own tribe, and have them
 get down on their territory, and dig earth, and give it to you.

(TRIBE LEADERS TO THEIR TRIBES. THE MESSAGE IS APPROXIMATELY)

TRIBE LEADERS

We need earth. Get way down on the ground, and dig lots of dirt
 for me, and put it in this giant-sized bucket.

(THEY DO)

Marvelous. I think we have enough now. Oops. Don't spill it.
 Now, who can help me carry this in to Creator?

(SOMETIMES SEVERAL VOLUNTEER, SOMETIMES THE ENTIRE TRIBE)

Thank you very much. Now go back and sit on our territory.

CREATOR

(ON LADDER)

All my creatures upon the earth, I have seeds which I am going to plant in each one of these mounds of earth.

(HE DOES)

Now, to make the seeds grow, every creature in the world must help. Help by making growing sounds. Help sing the mountains up.

(EVERYONE MAKES A HUGE RISING SOUND AS THEY WATCH THE MOUNTAINS RISE)

TRIBE LEADERS

(TO TRIBES, APPROXIMATELY)

Oh. Look at the mountain. Way up there. The top goes right into the sky. Sit right here. I'm going to climb the mountain. And when I get to the top, I'm going to wave to you. I'll be very high up, so watch for me. I'll wave.

(THE LEADERS CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN, CALLING AND WAVING TO THEIR TRIBES WHEN THEY GET TO THE TOP. THEN THEY START A KIND OF JUMPING/CLAPPING CELEBRATION, WHICH TURNS INTO A VARIATION OF THE ORIGINAL DANCE. THEY COME TO A CIRCLE AGAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, AND THEY FACE OUT TOWARDS THE TRIBES.)

UNISON

The sun, the moon, and the seasons.

BLUE

A long time ago, before you were born, before even grandmothers and grandfathers were born, the Sun and the Moon used to shine together. They were brothers, and they lived together in the village with their mother.

(TWO ACTORS HAVE PUT ON THEIR HEADDRESSES AND BECOME THE SUN AND THE MOON. THEY STAND ON LADDERS ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE CIRCLE, HOLDING LARGE "LOLLIPOP" REPRESENTATIONS OF THEMSELVES, WHICH THEY MOVE IN UNISON IN ARCS OF RISING AND SETTING. NOW BLUE PUTS ON A HEADDRESS AND BECOMES SKY WOMAN, THEIR MOTHER. (WHEN SHE NARRATES SHE WILL BE REFERRED TO AS BLUE. OTHER TIMES SHE IS SKY WOMAN) SHE GOES INTO AN AREA THAT WILL REPRESENT THEIR HUT, AND STARTS TO PREPARE A MEAL)

SKY WOMAN

Today, for my handsome sons, my elder son, the Moon, and my younger boy, the Sun, I will make a delicious feast. I have in my house a basket of red berries. I also have a basket of delicious brown nuts. And, buried in the ground, I have saved some meat.

Gone?!

Moon, come into the house.

MOON

Mother's calling.

(HE INTERRUPTS HIS ARC, GIVES THE MOON STICK TO A PREVIOUSLY APPOINTED "MOON HOLDER," AND CEREMONIOUSLY GOES INTO HIS HUT.)

SKY WOMAN

Moon, my elder son, I would speak to you and your younger brother, the Sun. Go and call him.

MOON

(HE STICKS HIS HEAD OUT OF THE HOUSE)

Younger brother, Sun, our mother's calling for us. Hurry!

(SUN GIVES HIS SUN TO AN OFFICIAL HOLDER AND HURRIES INTO THE HUT. BOTH BOW FORMALLY TO THEIR MOTHER)

SKY WOMAN

Handsome, shining, resplendent sons. Today I would make for you a delicious feast. But there is no meat in the house. So you must go into the forest and catch some. Moon, take your younger brother, the Sun, with you.

MOON

Come, younger brother.

(THEY LEAVE THE HUT)

Younger brother, get our spears.

(SUN DOES. MOON STARTS OFF)

SUN

Moon!

MOON

What?

SUN

Shouldn't we take the twine to bind up the legs?

MOON

Younger brother, I've already told you to bring along the twine.

(THEY SET OUT THROUGH THE FOREST, MOON IN THE LEAD. MOON BECOMES APPREHENSIVE. THE WAY AHEAD LOOKS DANGEROUS)

MOON

Younger brother, I've led the hunt so often, I don't need to this time. You lead it. You need the experience.

SUN

I'll do my best, Moon.

(HE TAKES THE LEAD AND THEY CONTINUE)

Moon, we've hunted in this part of the forest for a long time, and the game has become very scarce. Don't you think we should hunt over here?

MOON

We shall hunt where we've always hunted.

SUN

Very well, Moon.

(THEY GO IN THE OLD DIRECTION, BUT MOON MAKES SOME SURREPTICIOUS INSPECTIONS IN THE NEW AREA)

MOON

Younger brother, look! Tracks leading over in that direction. We'd better hunt over there today.

SUN

An excellent idea, Moon.

(THEY FOLLOW THE TRACKS)

Moon, I think I see an antelope.

MOON

You don't see any antelope. Your eyes are very bad, younger brother.

SUN

I must be mistaken.

(THEY CONTINUE AFTER THE TRACKS)

MOON

Younger brother, look! These new tracks I followed lead right to an antelope.

SUN

You have very keen eyes, Moon. As the older brother, you should have the honor of the first kill.

(MOON GOES THROUGH ELABORATE PREPARATIONS, STARTS OFF, LOSES HIS NERVE)

MOON

Younger brother, I've done this so often before, you should go first this time. You need the experience.

SUN

Well, I'll try my best, Moon.

(SUN AIMS... "Hah" ... A DIRECT HIT)

MOON

(AS SOON AS SUN HAS STRUCK THE PREY, HE THROWS HIS SPEAR)
Hah! I got him!

SUN

Nice shot, Moon.

MOON

Tie up the legs.

(THEY PULL THEIR SPEARS OUT OF THE ANIMAL. MOON HOLDS HIS, WHILE SUN PUTS HIS IN THE GROUND. SUN THEN TIES UP THE LEGS, AND SLIPS MOON'S SPEAR THROUGH)

Slip your spear through.

(SUN DOES)

Lift. Ugh.

(THEY LIFT TOGETHER)

MOON (CONT.)

Ugh. Ugh. The weight is cutting into my shoulder, little brother. You'll have to carry your end a little lower...Ugh. Lower still...a little lower.

(SUN IS NOW IN A DEEP CROUCH AT THE REAR END OF THE BURDEN.
THEY START OUT FOR HOME)

We're going in the wrong direction. Turn around.

(TURNING IS A BIG UNDERTAKING, WITH SUN CIRCLING AROUND
THE MOON, THE PIVOT. THEY START OFF AGAIN.)

SUN

Moon, are you sure this is the right direction?

MOON

You pushed me in the wrong direction. Turn around.

(THEY RE-PIVOT, AND ARE FINALLY ON THEIR WAY HOME)

BLUE

It was a very successful hunt that day, and on their way home through the woods they met a beautiful girl.

(AN ACTRESS STEPS FORWARD AS THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL. THE HUNTERS ARE COMPLETELY TAKEN WITH HER, AND THE FEELING IS SO MUTUAL THAT FOR A WHILE THEY ARE ALL TONGUE-TIED)

GIRL

Is that yours?

MOON

I killed it.

SUN

We killed it together.

MOON

Would you like to touch it?

(HE GALLANTLY LEADS HER TO THE ANIMAL)

GIRL

Oh. Oh, he's so big! Huge! He's a monster. You must be very strong. And brave, too. Where are you taking him?

SUN

We live in the village. We're taking him to our mother.

GIRL

Then you have no wives?

BOTH

No!

SUN

Do you have a husband?

GIRL

Oh, I live in the forest...with my mother.

SUN

Well then you can marry one
of us.

MOON

Then you can marry me.

MOON

I am the elder brother. I am very brave, and very strong,
and I come from a long line of hunters.

SUN

Well, I'm everything that my older brother is, and I'm very
loyal to my family.

GIRL

(TO MOON)

I like you...

MOON

Oooooooo, you'll marry me then. She's going to marry me.

GIRL

(TO SUN)

...and I like you...

SUN

Oh. HaHAH!

GIRL

...but Mother has always said that she would choose my husband
for me. Come back tomorrow. I promise you I'll take you both
to her. Goodbye!

BLUE

The girl disappeared back into the woods, and the boys returned
home.

(THEY TAKE THE BEAST TO SKY WOMAN'S HUT)

SKY WOMAN

What a magnificent beast! Brave sons! Today you shall skin the
beast.

(THEY DO)

Tomorrow you shall cut it into smaller pieces.

(THEY DO)

And on the following day, I shall cook you a delicious feast.

MOON

The Sun will have to finish my work for me. I have to go back
to the forest.

SKY WOMAN

You have to...?

MOON

Mother, we both have to go back to the forest.

MOON

I met a beautiful girl in the forest today, and she said I was brave, and strong, and she liked me very much. And tomorrow, when I go back to the forest she's going to marry me.

SUN

We met a very lovely girl, and tomorrow she's going to take us both to meet her mother. And so we have to go back to the forest.

SKY WOMAN

But you can't both marry her...

MOON

Well, she said that she would decide to marry me tomorrow.

SUN

No! Her mother's going to choose between us.

SKY WOMAN

Oh, I see.

Tomorrow, then, I will do your work for you. But first...come.
(SHE MAKES THEM KNEEL FOR A KIND OF BLESSING)

The forest can be a very dangerous place. Protect each other.

BLUE

Early the next morning, the boys set off on their way. But unbeknownst to them, the mother of the beautiful girl had set up terrible enchantments in the forest to test their bravery.
(THE MOTHER SETS HER ENCHANTMENTS THROUGH A MYSTERIOUS DANCE. THEN:)

MOTHER

Yellow tribe! Ah-rohn-ah-seetzi-too-roo!

(OR ANY OTHER MAGIC WORD)

You are a grove of pointed swords! Rise! Come together! Grab hands! And point your swords towards the hunters!

(IF THE TRIBES ARE SMALL, INCLUDE ALSO THE GREEN TRIBE AND THE PURPLE TRIBE. AT ANY RATE, THIS TAKES A LITTLE SUPERVISION, AND IT IS BEST TO FREEZE ALL OTHER ACTION UNTIL THE SWORDS ARE SET UP. THE MOTHER JOINS THE TRIBES.)

MOON

Younger brother, look at all those sharp swords over there. That's a whole grove of gleaming swords. How are we going to get through?

SUN

We'll just have to battle our way through. Come on.

(THERE ENSUES A SPIRITED ENCOUNTER IN WHICH THE HUNTERS CHARGE INTO THE SWORDS AND ARE THROWN BACK ON TO THE GROUND, ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE TIMES)

MOTHER

(MAGIC WORD!)

Swords, disappear back to your territory.

(WITH A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT, THEY DO)

MOON

Sh! They've gone. They've disappeared.

SUN

I've captured two of them, look!

(HE HAS TWO CHILDREN.)

(MOTHER CROSSES TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FOREST TO ACTIVATE HER NEXT TEST, WHILE THE BROTHERS RECOVER FROM THEIR FIRST ADVENTURE. THE FOLLOWING SCENES TAKE PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY)

MOTHER

Orange tribe. Oh-wah-hah-ti
kah-nah!

(OR ANY SUCH WORD)

You are a grove of densely planted trees. Rise! Come very close together. Lift your branches! And don't let the hunters through!

(MOTHER JOINS THE FOREST.)

MOON

Get me up, will you?...Now remember, one of those swords is for me. But I'll let you take care of them both.

SUN

Where do you suppose they came from?

MOON

Never saw them before.

SUN

Well, watch out for the points. They're very sharp.

MOON

Oh, they're not that sharp. Look. Owwwww! Ach!

SUN

Here, let me hold them. And be careful!

MOON

Younger brother, look at that forest over there. Those trees are so close together! I can't see any light between them.

SUN

We'll have to battle our way again.

MOON

Then we'd better start from way over here.

SUN

(TO SWORDS)

You wait for us here. We're going to battle our way through.

(MORE BATTLING AND GETTING THROWN BACK)

Wait! I have an idea.

MOON

Oh, your ideas are always terrible.

SUN

No! Look! We'll take these swords that we captured, and we'll chop down all of the trees. Here, hold this one.

MOON

Now that's not going to work. The swords aren't even sharp, remember? The only way is to battle our way through.

(MORE BATTLING. IT IS NOT WORKING. THE BROTHERS ARE TIRED AND DISCOURAGED. AD LIBS TO THIS EFFECT)

Younger brother, I have a brilliant idea. These swords that I captured can chop down anything. We can chop down the whole forest.

SUN

As you say, Moon.

(TO HIS SWORD)

Ready, sword? Point forward.

(THE BROTHERS AIM THEIR SWORDS. BUZZ-SAW FASHION, THEY CHOP DOWN ALL THE TREES. THE MOTHER HELPS THIS BY BEING THE FIRST TO GO. THE BROTHERS AD LIB:

Look at it fall!
Another one down!
Chop! Chop over here.
Over there! ETC.)

MOTHER

(RISING AND TAKING COMMAND)

Ah-rah-ah-tee-shee-bah! Swords, disappear!

(SHE GESTURES THEM BACK TO THEIR TERRITORY)

SUN

Nothing but dead trees now.

MOTHER

Trees disappear!

(SHE SIGNALS THEM OFF, TOO, AND THE HUNTERS MAY HELP IF NEEDED. THEN SHE TAKES OFF FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM WHERE TWO OF THE ACTORS HAVE SET UP A "LAKE," A LONG SLASHED FABRIC.)

MOON

Younger brother, I'm exhausted. Absolutely dead. I can't go through another one of those things without a drink of water or something.

SUN

Well, there's a lake over there. We can get a drink at the lake.

MOON

Wait a minute. I'm not sure I trust the lake. It might be another one of those tricks.

SUN

It doesn't look like a trick. It looks like a lake.

MOON

And it looks cool.

SUN

And water.

MOON

And I'm thirsty.

SUN

Come on. We'll drink some of it.

MOTHER

(ANOTHER MAGIC WORD)

(HUGE BONES RISE UP FROM THE WATER)

SUN

BONES!

(THE BONES DISAPPEAR)

MOON

(SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH SUN'S SPEECH)

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Did you see those bones of dead people? Oh!

SUN

You're the older brother. You lead the way.

MOON

I... Well... I'll lead the way... and I'll be right behind you.

Are they gone?

SUN

Yes, they're all gone.

MOON

You're sure?

(MOTHER PRONOUNCES ANOTHER MAGIC WORD, AND HUGE TEETH RISE ABOVE THE WATER)

SUN

Oh! Teeth! Teeeeth!

MOON

Oh! Oh! No! Teeth! Those teeth are going to bite my head off. This is the end. I'm going home.
(HE RUNS OFF)

MOTHER

(ANOTHER MAGIC WORD AND THE WATERS OF THE LAKE RISE ALMOST OVER SUN'S HEAD. HE SWIMS FRANTICALLY TO KEEP ABOVE WATER, AND FINALLY THE LAKE RECEDES.

ANOTHER MAGIC WORD AND FIRE AND SMOKE RISE FROM THE LAKE AND CHASE SUN. HE FIGHTS THEM OFF.)

SUN

Fire...smoke...No...No...You won't make me run away.

(FIRE AND SMOKE REcede. ANOTHER MAGIC WORD. THE LAKE LOWERS AND THE BEAUTIFUL GIRL RISES THROUGH IT)

GIRL

Sun. Oh, Sun, I'm so proud of you. You stayed through all the tests and you were so brave. Will you come with me now to meet my mother?

(SHE LEADS HIM TO HER MOTHER)

GIRL

Mother, this is the Sun.

MOTHER

Daughter, you have chosen the truly brave hunter. He will make a strong and loving husband. Be together.

(THE LAST SENTENCE IS THE ENTIRE WEDDING CEREMONY, AS MOTHER PERFORMS A BLESSING WITH HER HANDS)

BLUE

And so the Sun took his new bride with him back to his village.

SUN

Mother! Mother!

SKY WOMAN

Sun! You're safe! You're home!
(SHE EMBRACES HIM)

SUN

Mother, I've brought my bride from the forest.

SKY WOMAN

Daughter!
(EMBRACE)

MOON

He's back.

SUN

It is fitting that the older brother should marry first, but my older brother, the Moon, ran away. So I've taken her to be my bride.

(A CEREMONIAL STAMPING AND SHOUTING IS NOW THE EQUIVALENT OF A DECLARATION OF WAR. THEN FIGHTING ENSUES BETWEEN THE BROTHERS WITH MUCH WRESTLING AND POUNDING. AT THE CRUCIAL MOMENT, SKY WOMAN INTERCEDES)

SKY WOMAN

No! Stop the fighting! There will be no fighting! Sun has won his wife fairly. She may live in the village with him.

There will be no more fighting. No longer will you shine together.

(THE BROTHERS SEPARATE, MOON GOING TO ONE LADDER, SUN GOING TO HIS WIFE.)

BLUE

And so it was that when the Sun was at home in the village with his wife, the Moon rose in the sky. And when the Moon had set, the Sun rose.

(SUN BIDS GOODBYE TO HIS WIFE AND GOES TO HIS LADDER)

The sun was very happy with his new wife, and wanted to shine especially brightly for her. And one day he noticed, fishing at the river nearby, a young boy, wearing a brightly colored feather cloak.

SUN

If I had such a feather cloak, I'd be more splendid than the Moon.

(HE PICKS UP A SKIN AND DESCENDS TO VISIT THE YOUNG FISHERMAN)

Good morning.

BOY

Oh, are you the Sun? What are you doing so close to the earth?

SUN

I have something to ask you.

BOY

What could you ask of me?

SUN

Give me your feather cloak, and I'll give you my goatskin blanket for it.

BOY

My grandmother made this feather cloak for me. I cannot give it to you.

SUN

But you can say that the Sun gave you this blanket. Does anyone else have a blanket from the Sun?

BOY

My grandmother was a long time in making this feather cloak. And she was a longer time in getting all the beautiful feathers for it.

SUN

But your grandmother could look up into the sky every day and say, "I made a feather cloak for the Sun."

BOY

Not even the chief of our village has a feather cloak like mine.

SUN

But does the Sun come to bargain with the chief of your village?
(THE SUN IS SHOWING HIS SKIN)

BOY

Oh, you only have a goatskin.

SUN

But this is a magic blanket.

BOY

It's a dull grey--not like my feather cloak.

SUN

This is a magic blanket, better than your fishing line. Now watch. I dip it into the stream, and it catches two fish.
(HE DOES AND IT DOES)

BOY

It did. It caught two fish immediately!

SUN

Try it.

BOY

It caught two more fish!...and still two more!

(BY THIS TIME THE SUN HAS REMOVED THE BOY'S CLOAK)

BOY

I don't know whether my grandmother will like this or not.
She made the feather cloak for me.

(AND HE CONTINUES FISHING)

SUN

(ASCENDING LADDER)

But your grandmother will be the first woman of the village.
She'll say, "I made a feather cloak for the sun." And she'll
be proud.

BOY

(HE HAS EIGHT FISH BY NOW)

I still don't know whether my grandmother will like it. But if
I catch two fish every time I dip this blanket into the water,
she won't punish me.

BLUE

Now the Sun was very proud, in his new cloak...so proud that
he didn't even think of how hot his rays were becoming.

(SUN ARCS HIS "SUN," HISSING)

Soon the earth grew hot, so very hot that all the birds and animals
of the world began to groan and complain.

(FOUR OF THE ACTORS ARE NEXT TO THEIR TRIBES, GROANING AND
COMPLAINING. THEY ARE CUCKABURRA BIRD, ROOSTER, TIGER CAT
AND BULL)

CUCKABURRA BIRD

Oh, it's so hot, so hot. Ooooooooooo. Tiger Cat, Tiger Cat, I'm
most horribly hot. I can't stand the Sun.

SUN

Hmph Can't stand the Sun.

TIGER CAT

I can't stand him, either. The grrass is so hot, it's burrrrrning
my feet. Mrrrrrrr. Bull, Mrrrrrrr. Bull, is it hot where you
arrrrrre?

SUN

Can't stand the Sun, either.

BULL

Mmmmmmm, MMmmmmmmmm. I'm mmmmmmmmelting. All my mmmmmmmmmmuscles
are gone. I hate the Sun. Roooooster, how are you?

SUN

Hates the sun!

ROOSTER

I'm so hot, I feel like a roast chicken. I'm roasting. I'm broiling. The Sun ought to be eliminated, that's what I think.

SUN

Eliminated!

CUCKABURRA

Down with the Sun! Down with the Sun!

THE OTHER ANIMALS

(JOINING IN)

Down with the Sun! Down with the Sun! Down with the Sun!
Down with the Sun!

SUN

Ssssssssssilence! I've heard your inssssults and sssss shouting, and if I hear any more of that, I'm going to sssssset and never rise again.

ANIMALS

Down with the Sun! Down with the Sun! Down with the Sun!
Down with the Sun!

SUN

SSSSsilence! You've been warned. Now I'm going to set, and never rise again.

(THE SUN SETS. FIRST THERE ARE EXTENSIVE CHEERS FROM ALL OF THE ANIMALS, THEN SIGNS OF RELIEF. THEN THE ANIMALS START CONVERSING WITH THEIR TRIBES. FOR EXAMPLE--

ANIMALS

Isn't it getting chilly?
I notice a draft.
Where is it coming from?
It's really very cold out. Don't you feel it?
Why has it gotten so cold?

(SOONER OR LATER ONE OF THE CHILDREN WILL TELL THE LEADER ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INSULT TO THE SUN AND THE PRESENT CHILL. PRETTY SOON EVERYONE IS SHIVERING AND FREEZING)

CUCKABURRA

(TO HER TRIBE)

Oooooooooow, Oooooooooooooow. What can we dooooooo? We'd better call a council meeting.

(THEY BEAT OUT A VERY SIMPLE RHYTHM ON THE FLOOR. ONE BY ONE THE TRIBE LEADERS PICK IT UP WITH THEIR TRIBES. FOR EXAMPLE:)

TRIBE LEADERS

Hear that? They're calling a council meeting. Let's join them.

(WHEN EVERYONE IS BEATING, THE LEADERS GO TO MEET IN THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE)

CUCKABURRA

It's cold.

TIGER

It's cold.

BULL

It's cold.

ROOSTER

It's freezing.

TIGER

What are we going to do?

CUCKABURRA

What can we do?

BULL

We have to go to see Sky Woman.

ROOSTER

Sky Woman? How do we get there?

BULL

Follow me. I know the way.

(THEY ALL FOLLOW THE BULL. AD LIBS ON THE WAY)

ANIMALS

Oo, I'm just trembling.

I'm freezing to the ground.

My bones are cracking; are we there yet?

I feel like frozen chicken now.

BULL

We're here.

(TO AUDIENCE)

Help us call Sky Woman.

ANIMALS

Sky Woman! Sky Woman! Sky Woman! Sky Woman!

ROOSTER

There she is.

SKY WOMAN

What is it, creatures of the earth? What is it you want from me?

CUCKABURRA

(TO BULL)
You tell her.

BULL

Sky Woman, we insulted the Sun. And he set. And now we're all freezing. Oooooooo.

SKY WOMAN

If you have insulted my son, you have learned what a very proud man he is. You will have to go back to him.

(THEY ALL RUN AWAY FROM THIS IDEA, SCATTERING. AD LIBS:)

ANIMALS

No, I'll never go back.
We can't do that. ETC.

SKY WOMAN

You must find some way to reach him. And if the first way does not work, keep trying until you find the right way.

(SHE LEAVES. MANY CONFUSED RESPONSES. AD LIB:)

ANIMALS

We can't go.
He'll never listen to us.
We started it, but he doesn't like us any more.

BULL

We'll all just freeze to death.

ROOSTER

Wait a minute. Don't give up yet. Rooster will save you all.

BULL

You? Little screechy Rooster?

ROOSTER

Well, you know the Sun was a friend of mine. We had many visits. I'll bet he'll come out if I ask him nicely.

(WITH A CROW HE IS OFF. THE OTHER ANIMALS BLOCK HIS WAY AND CARRY HIM BACK)

ROOSTER

Aaaa, Aaaa, what are you doing to me? Oaaaaaa! Oh!

BULL

Rooster, you can't go to see the Sun. You're little, and you're noisy, and he won't listen to you. Now I am big, and I am strong, and I am tough. I am the one who's going to see the Sun. And when I get there, he will shine.

(TO OTHER ANIMALS)

Hold him.

BULL (CONT.)

(HE GOES TO THE SUN)

Mr. Sun, Mr. Sun. Come on out. I, the bull, am calling to you, and I demand your presence.

(THE SUN SENDS OUT A SCORCHING HEAT RAY AND BURNS BULL.

BULL, IN AGONY, STAGGERS BACK TO THE ARMS OF HIS FRIENDS.)

ROOSTER

Now that wouldn't have happened if you had let me go. But I'm on my way now. Just watch me.

(TIGER AND CUCKABURRA PULL HIM BACK, SCREAMING)

TIGER

Rooster, you'd better not be in such a hurry. The Sun won't listen to you because you're too silly looking. Just look at you, with your feathers sticking out all over the place. But he will listen to me, because I'm a beautiful animal.

(SHE ADVANCES)

And Suns listen to Tigers. Misterrrr Sun. Misterrrrrr Sun, this is Tiger calling. Come on out and shine on my stripes, Mr. Sun.

SUN

(UNDER THE EARTH)

Stripes--huh!

(HE SENDS OUT ANOTHER BLISTERING SUN RAY. TIGER BARELY MAKES IT BACK)

ROOSTER

Now you have to let me go. I'm telling you, I know how to get him to come out.

(HE IS OFF)

CUCKABURRA

(BLOCKS HIM)

No-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo. No-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo. You know nothing. You're only one skinny rooster, with a skinny brain. But I can get all the clever creatures of the green forest to go with me.

(SHE GOES TO HER TRIBE)

Come, creatures of the green forest. We'll get Mr. Sun, won't we? Come with me.

(GREEN TRIBE GOES WITH HER)

Now call Mr. Sun in your very best animal voices. Mr. Sun... Sing a little louder. Maybe he didn't hear you. Mr. Sun...

SUN

Huh?

CUCKABURRA

Did you see that? Did you see it! He turned around and he ignored us, after we called to him so sweetly. Well this time we'll show him.

(SHE SCREECHES AND SO DO THEY)

Mr. Sun! Mr. Sun! Mr. Sun! Mr. Sun!

(THE SUN SENDS OUT ANOTHER TERRIBLE RAY. THE ANIMALS ARE NEARLY DONE IN, AND COLLAPSE ON TO THEIR TRIBAL TERRITORY)

ROOSTER

You see! You see! You should have let me go in the first place. I can do it. I know I can.

ALL THE ANIMALS

No!

CUCKABURRA

It's for your own good.

TIGER

You'll get burned.

BULL

If he didn't want us, he certainly won't want you.

ROOSTER

Now I know. You don't want me to go. You're jealous of me. Well, I'll ask my tribe if I should go. Red Tribe, should I go to the Sun?

(IF THEY SAY YES)

See? They want me to go and I'm going.

(IF THEY SAY NO)

Well, it seems like nobody wants me to go, but I'm going anyhow.

(IF THEY ARE DIVIDED)

You see? A lot of them want me to go.

(EN ROUTE)

I'll do it. He's a good friend of mine. He'll listen to me. This is far enough.

Good morning, Mr. Sun.

He didn't answer me.

Mr. Sun, how are you feeling today? How's your health? I can see you peeking over the edge...Oh, you're pale. You should come out for some fresh air.

SUN

No, Mr. Rooster. You're trying to trick me.

ROOSTER

What?

SUN

You're trying to make me rise again. Well I'm never going to rise again. I've been insulted by every one, and you'll never see me again.

ROOSTER

Oh, Mr. Sun, you just hurt my feelings so badly. Why, do you know what I had to go through just to get here to say "good morning" to you?

I had to swim across rivers.

And I climbed mountains.

And then I had to go down through a valley.

And then through a dark cave.

And then a swamp, ugh.

All because I thought you were my best friend, and you would appreciate it. And now you say I'm trying to trick you. Well, you hurt my feelings. So I'm going to go home and cry myself to sleep.

(STARTS TO LEAVE)

SUN

Hm.

ROOSTER

Sky Woman said, "Keep trying everything until something works." ...something that works...

Wooooo. Wooooo...Mr. Sun, would you do me one little favor after all I did for you? Just one little favor? Please?

SUN

What is it, Mr. Rooster.

ROOSTER

I didn't mind that long trip here to see you. Not one bit. I even loved it. But there was one thing that I was scared of. And now I'm frightened to death.

SUN

What is it?

ROOSTER

The jungle leopard. I know he saw me on my long journey here. He couldn't help it. And now he's lying in wait for me. He could be any place. Oh, please protect me. Please. Please. After all I did for you.

SUN

How can I protect you from a jungle leopard?

ROOSTER

Scare him away if he tries to kill me. Oh please?

SUN

How will I know if he's trying to kill you?

ROOSTER

I'll give you my "coc-a-doodle-doo." Oh please. After all I did for you.

SUN

All right. I'll protect you. But I'm never rising again.

ROOSTER

Oh no. You shouldn't. I know just how you feel. But I want you to know you're the best friend anyone ever had. Goodbye.

(ROOSTER GOES AN APPROPRIATE DISTANCE, AND THEN SOUNDS A TREMENDOUS CROW. THE SUN COMES UP IMMEDIATELY, BUT SEES NO LEOPARD.)

SUN

Where's the jungle leopard?

ROOSTER

Ah ooo O O ah. Oh, he just ran over the hills to get away. Oh, you saved my life, Mr. Sun. Thank you. Thank you.

SUN

He had time to run away? I zoomed up here just as fast as I could.....Oh.....Oh.....Oh.....Mmmmmmm, Mmmmm.....mmmmmmmmmm. It's wonderful being out here in the air again.

Mr. Rooster, I want to thank you for making me rise again...

ROOSTER

It was my pleasure.

SUN

And I'm going to give you a present.

ROOSTER

A present!

SUN

I want you always to wear this comb on your head. Come here.

(HE ATTACHES THE COMB TO THE ROOSTER)

There.

ROOSTER

Oh, oh. Thank you. Thank you.

ANIMALS

(CHEERING AND APPLAUDING FOR ROOSTER, AD LIB)

Rooster, rooster. He saved us all!

Yeaay, Rooster.

Yeeay, Rooster, the bravest of all. ETC

BLUE

That night, all of the animals went home as the sun set. And every morning after, the sun rose again. But, just to make sure, early every morning Mr. Rooster...

(HE COMES OUT AND CROWS)

SUN

(RISES)

Good morning, Mr. Rooster.

ROOSTER

Good morning, Mr. Sun.

SUN

How do you like your new comb?

ROOSTER

Oh, it's beautiful, but all the other animals are jealous.

SUN

Jealous?

ROOSTER

You gave me a gift, but the only thing they got was burned.

SUN

Call them together, and bring them here.

ROOSTER

Cuckaburra, Bull, Tiger Cat, the Sun wants to see us.

(THE ANIMALS GATHER BEFORE THE SUN)

SUN

Animals, the reason I've called you together is because I know you've been burned many times by the rays of the Sun. I want to give each of you something to protect you from those rays. Cuckaburra Bird, I'm giving you a bag of clouds to shade the earth in the summer.

CUCKABURRA

Thank you, Mr. Sun.

SUN

Mr. Bull, I'm giving you a bag of wind to cool the earth in the autumn.

BULL

Mmmmmmm. Thank you, Mr. Sun.

SUN

Tiger Cat, I'm giving you a bag of snow to make the earth beautiful in the winter.

TIGER

Grrrrr.

(SHE CANNOT TALK WITH THE BAG IN HER MOUTH)

SUN

Mr. Rooster, for you, a bag of rain to enrich the earth in the spring.

ROOSTER

Oh, thank you, Mr. Sun. Thank you.

SUN

All of you go back to your tribes, and open up your bags when you get there.

(THEY GO)

SUN

Cuckaburra Bird was the first one to open her bag. Great big soft clouds floated out, and sailed all around the world.

CUCKABURRA

(TO HER TRIBE)

We're all the clouds. Come, sail with me once around the world.

(THEY FLOAT ONCE AROUND THE CIRCLE.)

BLUE

Next, Bull opened his bag. Out blew a great wind.

BULL

Wind. Orange tribe, follow me a blow once around the earth.

(THEY DO)

BLUE

And when the earth was cooled by the great winds, Tiger Cat opened her bag. And when she did, lovely white snow fluttered down through the skies.

TIGER

Follow me all over the world, Snow.

(THEY DO)

BLUE

And when the earth was covered by a big blanket of snow, then Rooster opened his bag, and a big rain danced out to enrich the whole earth.

ROOSTER

Red tribe, let's do a rain dance right where we are, and open up the clouds, and jump in the puddles.

(THEY DO. AT THE END OF THE RAIN DANCE, A SIGNAL IS GIVEN AND EVERYONE CLAPS THE STEADY BEAT OF THE FIRST CIRCLE DANCE. THE TRIBE LEADERS DANCE THIS FINAL VARIATION, AND LAND IN FRONT OF THEIR OWN TRIBES, KNEELING)

UNISON

(RISING AS THEY TALK)

And everything on earth grew, and grew, and grew, and went off to make the world beautiful.

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